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# Pennsylvania Freedmen's Bulletin.

PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER, 1867.

*The BULLETIN is the organ of the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, and will be issued hereafter in connection with the AMERICAN FREEDMAN.*

**OFFICE, 711 SANSOM STREET, PHILADELPHIA.**

## Thanksgiving.

The day is approaching in which we are called upon as a nation to meet together in all places of public worship and give thanks to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for the blessings of another year. Though it has been a year of much anxiety and excitement, the coldest hearts and the most despondent spirits must yet feel that there has been much to make the chorus of praise rise full and strong from one end of the land to the other. And will the thoughtful citizens of this Republic count it among the least of national blessings, that during the past year a work has been going on, by means of which so many of the 4,000,000 freedmen of the South have been under instruction? If "no government however strong, can bear up under the ignorance of millions of its people, accumulated in one part of its territory," it would be difficult to over-estimate the power for good of the efforts that have been made to combat ignorance with such weapons as the primer, the arithmetic, and the Bible, in the hands of a host of teachers. We not only receive from our teachers cheering reports of the progress of their pupils, but have applications from superintendents, Bureau officers and private individuals, for more teachers; and also for aid to sustain schools, which the people in many localities are endeavoring to establish, who, in their poverty, look to Northern benevolence for the assistance they so sorely need. But we cannot go forward unless we receive pledges that enable us to do so, and worse still, the number of our teachers this season must be greatly diminished, unless our hands are strengthened by friends of the cause to whom we now appeal.

The Women's Branch has sent out Thanksgiving Circulars to the churches in eastern Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey, and

while those who appreciate this work in its bearings upon the needs of the country and the times, shall thank God for it among other blessings, we trust they will not forget its claim upon their *Thank Offerings*.

## Report of the President of the Women's Freedmen's Relief Association for the month of October, 1867.

Your Chairman has little of interest to report to you as the result of work done during the past month. The chief employment of the officers of the Association has been simply that of reassembling our members and reorganizing for another year of work.

At the annual meeting held on the second Monday of October, all the former officers were re-elected to serve for the ensuing year; and I am glad to announce that, with the exception of Mrs. Clifford Smith and Miss Lucy Mayer, Vice-Presidents, and Miss Towne, Chairman of Committee on Education, all have consented to continue to the Association their valuable services.

Miss Sarah Walker, of Montrose, was elected a Vice-President, and Miss Jackson, Chairman on Education; both of whom have accepted the positions.

The Corresponding Secretary reports that she has been principally engaged in rallying her forces, enlarging the number of her corps of aids, preparing matter for the Freedman's Bulletin and getting all the office matters into train. Her aids have been engaged during the past week preparing to send out appeals to all the churches of the districts assigned to the Pennsylvania Commission, for a thanksgiving collection. It has been considered advisable to continue these thanksgiving appeals, as the seed thus sown each year has brought us in a good harvest of results.

There have not been as yet any receipts of clothing, excepting a parcel from Mrs. Douglass' school, although there have been several touching appeals for clothing from districts where there appears to be great destitution. One from near Culpepper C. H., Va., made by personal

application of a lady who had herself witnessed suffering and want so great that the people were sitting down in apathy and despair, we were in a measure able to meet, from some small donations sent us during the summer. It is not the intention of this Association to relax their efforts to gather supplies of clothing. There will necessarily be still much suffering this winter, owing to the very unsettled state of affairs at the South. Indeed, the work of education and relief must needs go hand in hand for some time, owing to the impoverished state of the country and the helplessness of the class whom we are trying to lift up out of the degradation of former slavery. The body must be clothed before the mind can be reached. In the mean time, whilst we hope for a liberal supply of clothing from our former Aid Societies, we are trying greatly to extend our work of education. Miss Jackson has enlarged her committee, and is making preparation for an active winter campaign. By the work of Mr. Cather we have assured to us the support of a teacher from Williamsport, Pa., to which place has been assigned Miss E. A. Hunn on St. Helena Island; one from Pottstown, which will adopt Miss Ann Scaring at Farmville, Va.; while Altoona will partially support Mr. Alvin Varner at Liberty C. H., Va. Bellefonte and Lock Haven have each secured a sufficient number of subscriptions, and other towns have entered into engagements to support teachers, but as the arrangements are not perfected, I will mention them at a future day. There is every reason to expect that our former schools will receive the support accorded to them last year, viz.: Miss Annie Heacock, by the 1st Unitarian Congregation; Miss Martha Heacock, by the Finance Committee, and Miss Chamberlain, through the efforts of Mrs. Dr. Joseph Parrish.

The Treasurer's account is scarcely of a cheerful character. The receipts for the month of October have been but \$29, with a counter-balancing expenditure of \$20. The balance in treasury of \$131 is permitted us rather by the courtesy of the gentlemen members of the Commission, to whom we are indebted for the loan of \$300 to pay for the services of our canvasser. So that in truth we have something less than nothing in our treasury. In every work of Christian philanthropy which depends for existence wholly upon free gifts, we have in great measure to live by faith—to live day by day looking to our Heavenly Father, and not knowing from whence will come to-morrow's bread. I pray that God may put it into the hearts of our friends to do liberal things this winter, and I greatly feel the necessity laid upon every one of us to a more earnest activity. The political current has set in against the negro. We are met on all sides with the reiterated complaint, "We are tired of the negro question!" And yet we who have put our hands to the plough dare not look back. We have pledged ourselves to send education and God's light to these people. Education is a most important element in the means of accomplishing the emancipation of the negro—emancipation from a century of enforced ignorance and semi-barbarism.

To every woman present I ask, "What work

will you do for us this winter?" It is not just to leave the burden for a few shoulders to bear. You each owe a duty here. Let every member to-day settle it with her own conscience how much of time, of influence, of work, of money will quit her obligation to this Association and to this cause, when the work is great and many have grown weary.

Before closing, I desire to call the attention of the ladies to one or two special claims. The duties of the Corresponding Secretary during the ensuing week will be very heavy, viz.: the addressing and folding some 1500 circulars to the churches of East Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. I ask as a special favor for volunteers to aid in this work, either to come to these rooms or to carry the work to their homes to do there. It is desirable to mail them during this week.

Again, I desire to call attention to the subject of the Industrial branch of our schools. Many of our teachers have established weekly sewing schools for the instruction of the girls. I need not enlarge upon the importance of this part of an education for every woman. I wish to impress upon you the necessity of procuring material for these industrial schools. So large a proportion of all the money that comes into our treasury is for the special purpose of teacher's salaries, that it is impossible for us to spend our funds upon the material requisite for these sewing schools. Will any here present enter into the work of visiting our dry goods merchants and enlisting their sympathies in this matter, so that they may send to us remnants, old fashioned or damaged goods, any thing which may be of little value to them, but most useful to us. I beg that some of the ladies present may at once undertake this excellent work.

Again, I would call your attention to the little books, prepared for subscriptions, upon the table. Small monthly subscriptions from one dollar upwards, which are little onerous to the giver and a constantly recurring source of income to the Association, are particularly sought. We hope that each of our members will take one of these books and seek to fill it with at least ten dollars per month.

If your Chairman seems urgent in pressing upon you these claims, it is because she feels earnestly that each member of this Association owes it to herself and to God to work all the more now that the world may for a time be against us. Respectfully submitted,

MARY ROSE SMITH.

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We give extracts from two late letters of Miss Laura Towne, who has returned to her home on St. Helena island, to find the people there suffering from the effects of the sickness during the past summer.

MILLS HOUSE, CHARLESTOWN, S. C.

Oct. 31, 1867.

ROBERT. R. CORSON,  
Corresponding Secretary

After one night at Weldon, we were not detained again, except that at Florence we had to

wait for the regular starting time of the morning train south, instead of making the usual close connection. I had a horrible remembrance of my own discomfort and starvations at this wretched place in the various times I have been obliged to wait there, and I was much opposed to setting foot in the hotel at all, though we arrived at three o'clock in the morning, and there was nothing but an open shed to shelter us. A gentleman who was well acquainted with the circumstances told us that the proprietor of that hotel once had charge of a military hospital, in which were the sick Union prisoners that were confined and starved to death at Florence. So not one of the ladies would enter the house, and tired as we were with three nights in the cars, we determined to wait for day outside. The kind gentleman, however, provided a shelter for us. He took us to the Freedmen's school-house, obtained the key, and we should have slept very comfortably on the benches had it not been so cold. After trying it for awhile we all aroused ourselves, and told or listened to stories of the war, or of our journey. We each had some slight encounter with "Secesh," to laugh over. I suppose our large party with transportation papers attracted attention, for very disagreeable and sometimes insulting remarks were made so loudly, that we could not fail to hear. I, for my share, had quite a long talk with a young lady just returning South, after a visit of three months at the North. She was very moderate in her tone. She said she wanted the poor *creatures* educated, certainly, it was all the reparation the North could now make them. Of course the North must educate them,—the South would never do it, for they, the Southerners, were all so opposed to a republican government, or republican principles that the pride in their hearts would never let them elevate the negro. They had been taught to consider and they fully believed themselves the superior of the negro, and would never condescend to teach him. Besides they were so poor, the North must pay for his education, and it was no more than it ought to do. She thought some yankee teachers had done a great deal of good, but others *would* take the negroes part against their employers and make trouble. She said, "We should make bitter teachers if we undertook it, our hearts are full of bitterness and pride, and opposition to a republican government. We are not fit to teach them." She said she for one would welcome teachers from the North, but that she would have no politics or domestic matters taught,—"nothing but books." Where I have used quotations marks, I think, I have given her exact words. She showed some candor, and as my close neighbor in the cars, much friendliness to me, but she was, as she said, full of pride and bitterness. She denounced the government for taxing the public to pay teachers salaries, and politely declined all belief in my statement that in this department *no* salaries were paid by the government but *all* by charitable associations. When she was explaining the contempt in which the Southerners held the negro and stating the necessity for keeping them at their proper distance, I pointed to an aristocratic party just across the car. It con-

sisted of a lady, her baby and colored nurse, returning from New York to their home South. The old, almost toothless, nurse was chewing a cracker and lifting the infant's mouth to hers to impart the moistened food conveniently. The little white baby's face full of hungry eagerness and delight, grinned at every contact, and *the long black chin was clutched at and crammed into the hungry open mouth every time a chance offered.* It was a little more than I could bear to look at, but the proud, *insolent* mother saw it all placidly, and when I said to the young lady, "You say, you Southerners cannot endure contact with 'those creatures'; what do you think of *that*?" I never saw such *contact* even with a white nurse." She laughed, and said, "Oh but we make them know their place—we never let them forget they are our servants—and then we don't mind that sort of thing."

When we reached Charleston, Col. Low, with his usual friendliness, had our baggage carted to the steamer without expense to us.

To-day we visit Mr. Cardoza's and Mr. Sumner's schools. Ours is about intermediate with regard to these two, Mr. Cardoza's (American Miss. Asso.), being far in the advance of us, and Mr. Sumner's somewhat behind. The latter has been open but two years, but Mr. Cardoza's normal school consists of free children who had some education before the war. We were intensely interested and much benefited by our visit.

Having arrived at her school she writes under date of Nov. 5th :

Our school has opened beautifully—full attendance, eager study, good behavior, and retentive memory cheer us. Miss Schofield and Miss Way are getting settled in household and school. They had seventy pupils the first day, and as soon as the people feel assured of the continuance of the school it will be over full.

I have not yet said a word to the freedmen about school support. It is no time. The whole island is as if a plague had passed over it, and in every family there is the languor and weakness of convalescence; for nearly *every individual* has been severely ill with fever, and they have not yet recovered spirits, or care for anything.

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The following extracts from a letter by Miss Millie Phelps (one of the teachers supported by the Ladies' Freedmen's Aid of the Church of the Holy Trinity), were written after the closing of her school in Lynchburg, Va., last summer. She is now laboring again at the same post, and among the same scholars to whom she became, in her first year, so warmly attached.

ROBERT. R. CORSON,  
Corresponding Secretary.

My school has closed. Never before, did a class of scholars so appeal to my feelings; by their past bondage, by their present contested freedom, and most of all, by the momentous

future. This last, I know is in God's hands. Yet who can help wondering with dread, what the future will bring this branded people? One can form no idea, how they can rouse the pathos of one's nature, except by contact with them. I speak from experience. I came here, with the *vague* idea that I was going to instruct the Freedmen. No more responsibility seemed resting upon me, than in ordinary schools. But one day in sight of their mournful faces, their eager yearning eyes; their thirst after knowledge, weighed my soul down with an unutterable responsibility. To most of them one needs to be missionary as well as teacher, for even in the midst of civilization, slavery has invested them with almost pagan inclinations of crime. From the first I have continually felt like crying unto God, "Help me, thou source of all strength."

My closing exercises were quite successful. The pieces with one or two exceptions were most ably rendered. It was a matter of surprise to me how they could render their parts so well in these exercises, considering the limited rehearsals I was obliged to have. The scholars, or at least the greater portion of them seem to possess an intuitive talent for elocution and for dramatic effect. My school has been very large and the sessions have extended from nine, morning, to five and even half past five, evening. So that most of the time for these rehearsals was gleaned from the hours outside of these sessions. Often it has been half past seven or eight o'clock before I reached my boarding place. I am so glad I gave them all this time. I wish I could have done much more.

One day while telling them of God's great works, I asked them what the stars were. One answered that they were lamps for God to see by, and that the Angels went round, and lighted them every night. I asked them how large the sun was, and they said, I reckon it is as large round as a plate. *Their eyes* were as large as "saucers" when I corrected their quite romantic ideas. They could not understand for some time why we did not fall off the earth, and I think they had a lingering fondness for the notions they promptly advanced that we live inside of the earth. I think it seemed slightly dangerous and certainly was accompanied with dizziness, the thought of living on the surface of a rolling ball. I trust however, after an elaborate explanation I enlightened them and gave them a greater sense of security.

Amongst other items this should be noticed. In canvassing the political divisions of the earth, and in citing illustrations, this point came up, the difference between the form of government in England and the United States, prefaced with proper explanations. I asked them if there were any *lords* or nobles vested with governing power in this country. Such shocked faces as were arrayed before me! One little girl after gaining breath, ventured to answer that they were *men* and not *lords*. I soon with silent amusement corrected their views, and they looked very important over this new bit of knowledge. \* \* \*

Respectfully,  
MILLIE PHELPS.

The kind letter of acknowledgment which follows is from a most earnest teacher and worker among the freed people.

CHARLESTON 6th Month 9th, 1867.

ROBERT. R. CORSON. Cor. Sec.

DEAR FRIEND:—Six months after leaving thy hands there came to mine the valuable box intrusted to my care by the Pennsylvania Branch American Freedmen's Union Commission. Its contents I shall distribute with care, striving to meet real needs only. At the poor house are some very forlorn creatures. One woman without friends, without legs, without a palate, without clothing, without hope or joy. In your box there may be one rag to comfort her. Scattered about are many old souls who want "Something to change, misses, for the bugs you know" All about the city are colored men out of employment, some of them getting occasional jobs, but most of them wanting. When I have urged them to go upon plantations they have said "Can't trust to contracts, last year folks didn't get anything."

Upon James Island some colored men are cultivating cotton, with a prospect of enriching themselves. They work with a will, because no uncertain contract can control their profits. Our papers bemoan the running away of their "hands" to attend political conventions, wholly ignoring the personal advantage that might accrue to the colored man from doing his own political work, and doing it well. Nearly every Southern sheet says "but we can control the vote of the blacks." The colored men in the country will soon find that the white man is dependent upon them for his bread and butter. In this city is a large colored orphan asylum under the charge of the N. Y. B. F. U. C. but supported mainly by the Bureau; they have now ninety-four children under their care. By the authority of the Bureau the children are taken as servants to all parts of the country. I sometimes let my charity fund slip into the children's plates, and leave blackberries and peas thereupon.

We were surprised a few days ago by a call from a white lady; a friendly call from a Southern lady is an event so rare, it is worth noticing. "Acquaintance is what is needed to destroy prejudice," she said. But what I wish to note is, that while she was unable to make her bank stock available, one of her former slaves took her to his house, furnished two rooms handsomely for her use, and anticipated most delicately her wants. "He expected me to remain with him indefinitely, but at the end of four months he lost two thousand dollars and I left him; now my money is available, and I help him in return. I cannot tell you how kind the whole family were to me every time I left the house, hot tea or coffee were handed me, I never came in or went out without a delicate lunch given me, my carpet was shaken twice a week, my room dusted constantly, all the family serving me, but keeping their own quarters. Charles is as white as I am, very intelligent and respected by every one, but he never sat before me."

Very truly, thine for the cause,

LUCY CHASE.